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Bard

## MEN

Men are weird. They see girls and think about them. A man sees a girl and takes her from wherever she is and sends her, accompanied, on weird journeys inside the man's head. A man drives her deep inside himself, to his hovel or castle, seaside or deep woods, and knows her there in all sorts of ways that are mostly his, just his, but maybe sometimes hers too a little bit. As if some of the real woman survived the journey and has her say in what he thinks, or is able to think. Maybe. How the image he's seized of this seen but unknown woman, her image, carries with it into him some urge or taste or appetite or even will that is not his. Maybe even it is not even hers, though it might be. Whose could it be? Are we to think there is an Angel of Desire who swoops through the lower airs and animates these borrowed images?

15 January 2008

= = = = =

Can there be waiting  
in the sense that a tune  
will not skip out of the hearing  
(the Germans call such  
a melody ein Ohrwurm,  
ear-worm, won't come  
out of the head, an worm  
in the apple of your head,  
oy veh, Horst-Wessel-lied  
a month of Sundays  
when the sun shines  
and the weekend is  
eight days long and beef  
roasting in the pan,

and all of this is waiting  
just for silence to come  
falling from the branches  
from the eaves of the garage  
from the linden tree  
from the broken rosebush  
the snowplow touched?

15 January 2008

## MUNDUS

It had a little mundus:  
I whittled a ditch  
around a field  
would be my town

I had a town all round  
filled it with folk  
birds sang in the trees  
and a bottle broke

a horse bled  
and a bottle broke  
the street filled with wine  
no one would drink

it flowed out every  
door and became the sea  
no I had a sea  
already it became the sky

nobody ever had a sky before.

15 January 2008  
Kingston

## [DREAM TEXT]

At 4:11 AM I awake thinking of Theodore of Mopsuestia  
after hours of playing jazz  
outdoors, lying on the ground near the woods  
with a woman, close, we lie pressed together,  
the other musicians are far away,  
we all are playing: she  
the vocalist beside me, I'm on soprano sax  
my horn stretched along her body  
half-muffled by her, by the autumn leaves  
we lie in, she's great,  
her music is all the music, it orders  
and controls all the rest,  
her voice runs us, rules us,  
I can barely hear myself.  
When we pause for a rest, excited, I say to her  
"if I were seventeen and we were in Balzac  
I'd say I'm in love with you.  
But I'm not and this isn't."  
She doesn't even smile, sad, worried,  
her husband is slipping away from her,  
she knows, it, there's another woman,  
he's with her right now, over there in the trees  
they're playing together, he's drifting  
away to that one from my partner, who still  
has to keep singing, I squeeze her,  
she doesn't even want him especially  
but she doesn't want him gone,  
who does want to lose anything?  
Even a disease is valuable.  
The music begins again, I am less  
confident now that the music I bring  
to the music can bring her to herself  
let alone me. The music is everything,  
her eyes are far away but her voice is here,  
strong again, always beginning.  
I need to know who Theodore of Mopsuestia is.

16 January 2008

= = = = =

**Nature is a superstition.**

**The veil of Isis is the human mind.**

These two statements leapt into my waking mind out of any context. I must leave them alone, unelaborated, uncommented. For now.

Let them rest, as nature does, beneath our eyes, beyond and before our wits.

= = = =

Sun out says me  
says who?

Words talk  
to themselves  
we listen.

One word is Lady Macbeth  
then look what we do.

One word is Parthenope  
and we look her up  
and find she is one of the Sirens  
whose song is dangerous, is sweet,  
and about her and her sisters  
the Suda says: *And the song of pleasure  
has no good consequence, only death*

One word is chair and we sit down  
in space! Hollow! Bright! All of us  
on chairs! And nobody there!

16 January 2008

= = = = =

*der Marschallin gewidmet*

Over time, time happens.  
It's like the long intestine  
going forward and looping back and  
turn around and finally go down—

time takes its time with us.  
And we can stop it, sure,  
a little while let the clock become  
just ornamental guilt on a marble ledge

and nothing changes. And then it does.  
Slippage, the wind, the inner  
certainty of dawn again, a gurgle  
in the pit of the mind, a thrill

where you need it least.  
The mirror hazes over with your breath  
moist in sympathy with the grief  
its bright bad news must bring you

while all your young lovers  
cool their heels in distant rooms.

16 January 2008



= = = = =

Some days it's just today.  
Some days it's tomorrow.  
How to figure out the difference  
ahead of time. Ahead of  
time is an island off the coast of nowhere.

16 January 2008  
[End of NB 303]

= = = = =

A man and a woman  
fell into each other.

Nobody noticed---  
nothing showed.

But they know all.

16 January 2008

## THE SUBJECT

Knowing something smaller than a T  
but bigger than an I  
a character between a person and a thing

a fresh wind from the ocean or  
a young gentleman pirate Stede Bonnet strung  
up on a December day in Carolina

what is the world coming to.  
I think of him slung on the meager gallows  
like a doorframe with no door in no wall

in no house that any living man has ever seen.  
He's there now, you can hear him  
moving about that clean old house when the wind blows.

16 January 2008

## THE SELECTION OF PLEASURE

marches the mind.

As once the birds over Mestre  
wrote out an alphabet  
a young American could recognize  
and know for the first time  
he was part of the whole story  
just because he could read,

or as in Homer's time the giddy sheep  
paid scant attention to their shepherd's  
scrannel flute yet all the while his tunes  
sustained their culinary investigations  
of this mere grassy habit of the world

so pleasure leads to pleasure and each  
precious syntax of entitlement or loss  
demands a staunch grammarian to parse  
the branching sentence of our ignorance

into the miraculous moment, or momentum  
of sheer assent. Yes this thing I feel  
feels all of me and takes me  
to a place I had not known  
and yet it seems like home,

that Oregon wild secret coast where in mist  
the agate of the heart, tossed  
this way and that way by the in and outcome  
of the waves is most at rest.

17 January 2008

= = = = =

Pull the night mask  
from the furniture  
and put it on.

To seal the eyes in  
so they must turn  
inside to see.

What is there  
for them is nowhere  
else outside.

Be not deceived:  
what you see  
is what is vanished

already or not come.  
May never come  
because it is there

already forever  
in the being seen.  
Now is never.

17 January 2008

= = = = =

A museum of incandescent  
unreliable visionaries  
these poems be.

Trust this word  
only as far as you can taste it.  
Thrust it savagely  
into the back of the mouth.

Can you swallow this?

These  
lines are the Wandering Jew.  
They will follow you everywhere  
in disguise. When you are a shepherd  
they will be your wolf  
then suddenly will be your sheep,  
all of them, every one

none of you will ever be lost.

17 January 2008

## THE ILIAD OF HOMER

A little boy with playing with tin soldiers  
one of them draws his tiny  
sword and plunges it into the boy.  
The wound expands, every wound expands  
to be as big as the intention  
behind the blade.  
The little boy dies. The neighborhood  
mourns him for a little while.

17 January 2008  
[shrine room]

= = = = =

Suppose I didn't know  
what the words meant  
or how to spell them  
but just kept talking?

Suppose a stone fell  
into a pond and liked the feeling  
so again and again it fell,  
over and over the beautiful

outward ripples please it  
going out and going out  
forever and *all of that*  
*I meant* the stone thinks.

A word is a stone that just keeps falling.

17 January 2008



[Dream Transcript]

I wake with a sense of almost intolerable burden. In my left hand is a scrap of parchment with a fragmentary brightly hand-colored coat of arms, all floriated. I understand that these are the arms of the Archduke. The one who shot himself – or was murdered — at Mayerling. And it seems I know at once that this was the most critical event in European, or even world, history of its era. Strangely, the sense of burden, a personal burden I must carry or discharge, immediately lifts off me when I hear or see or say the word “Archduke” – it is replaced instead by an immense sadness. No one can do anything about that death. It is so sad. Suicide saddest, murder viler. Fully awake now I cannot endure being in bed. I get up. It is almost light. In the distance I hear a snowplow clearing the road. I write all this down, and only when I’m through with transcribing the dream scrap proper do I recall that last night Charlotte handed me a CD of Beethoven trios, one of which was listed on the jacket as the Erzherzogtrio. I pointed out to her that this meant Archduke Trio.

18 January 2008

[Interesting: Erz/Herzog = Arch duke. But a false analysis would read: Erz/Herz = iron heart.]

= = = = =

The skeleton of suppose  
astonished my left eye—  
but it could be yours, padre,  
I'm not the only one who looks

for God in the unlikeliest.  
Say Mass with this in mind:  
a dreamer wakes up, the book  
still in his hands. Still

from before sleep? Or from  
the dream itself, that skeleton  
of every day that time  
drapes its shabby muscles on

to make us march. Pray  
for the pronouns, padre,  
who are all we ever are,  
typos in a boring document.

18 January 2008

= = = = =

It is light now. The light is white.  
I want to be asleep  
but not in bed.  
I want to be awake in a white world  
with nothing seen,  
full of light but somehow else.

I want my eyes to have closed on something right.  
Something I can clutch into the dark.

18 January 2008

= = = = =

All the things I don't need  
surround the thing I do

one tree in a forest of trees who knows  
which one is the one  
I have to climb  
or to cut down or be hanged from

myself to myself  
one eye closed against the impudent light

they call this sacrifice  
and me a pagan  
when it is the only thing or only way  
to know the thing I know.

19 January 2008

## ECCE ANCILLA DOMINI

Over Mary's head the dove  
(in Memling's Annunciation)  
inscribed within a gold-rimmed  
red halo forms a clock  
hands saying nine-fifteen

over her bed. Time to rise  
or rest or sleep so deep the body  
takes nine months to wake  
and then. And then another  
answers when she speaks.

Behold me, ready for what comes.

19 January 2008  
*for Don Bruckner*

ANNUNCIATIO

= = = = =

The scrabble mind of poets making sense  
the cocktail party crammed inside the head  
the downstairs non-stop disco, the bodies  
of everyone you ever knew still busy  
shambling around slutty dance moves  
and all you have is consonants and vowels  
you fool. Poetry is just cheating out loud.

19 January 2008

= = = = =

Or my father dancing  
lightfooted for the Keystone  
camera in Coney Island  
looks like nineteen thirty nine.  
I am nervous stalwart at his side  
moveless in short black pants.  
He's all over the sidewalk  
smiling, his hat never moving  
from his head for all his prance,  
yes, prance more than dance,  
on a side street with his back  
to the north and to his right  
side the huge trelliswork  
of the slow long chugging  
not too thrilling peaceful  
roller coaster called A  
Mile Through the Clouds  
he loved more than me to ride.

19 January 2008